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Defend

DEFEND NEWSLETTER #10

October 2023



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Annual Consortium Meeting Brussels, October 2023



The DEFEND consortium held its final annual meeting at the Hotel Marivaux in Brussels on 3 - 5th October, 2023. The meeting brought together guests and over 50 participants, from multiple partner organisations, who travelled from across Europe and even as far as Australia, to hear the outcome and updates of the work carried out as part of the DEFEND project. The project was delighted to have in attendance members of the Multi-Actor Panel (MAP), who provided advice and support in the dissemination and exploitation and impact of DEFEND outputs and also members of the Ethics Advisory Board (EAB), whose role is to advise the Consortium on ethical issues within the project.

The meeting was a huge success with positive feedback received from all parties.



The DEFEND Project Support Team would like to thank everyone that attended the meeting for their input and spirit of collaboration, the DEFEND project would not be successful without this focus on achieving its aims.

- [Facebook](#)

Defend is a Horizon 2020 project running from 2018 to 2023. This research received funding from the European Union's Horizon research and innovation programme under agreement No. 773701

Pip Beard, coordinator of the Defend 2020 project, made a fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Keele professor made a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons - Keele University



Defend Coordinator and now Head of University of Keele's School of Life Sciences, Pip Beard, has received a prestigious fellowship to honour her outstanding research.

Professor Pip Beard has been made a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), in recognition of her meritorious contributions to knowledge thanks to her work on poxviruses, and her advocacy in promoting research as a career for veterinarians.

Professor Beard is a veterinarian, virologist and pathologist who studies poxviruses that infect animals. Having first trained as a veterinarian in Sydney, Australia, she has gone on to have a distinguished career in research at universities and research institutes all over the world.

She is an expert in poxvirology, with a particular focus on poxviruses that cause disease in animals such as sheeppox virus, goatpox virus, lumpy skin disease virus, and mpox virus.

Her research aims to understand how poxviruses cause disease in their host, and then to apply this knowledge to the development of new tools for the control and prevention of disease.

encouraged, mentored and supported me, and most of all to the past and present members of my research team. I hope to use my Fellowship status to encourage more veterinarians to consider a career in research.”

The RCVS Fellowship is awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to the field of veterinary science and medicine, to help advance veterinary standards within the profession.

Dr Chris Tufnell FRCVS, Chair of the RCVS Fellowship Board, added: “Congratulations to Professor Beard for being elected to the RCVS Fellowship, a learned society dedicated to advancing the art and science of veterinary medicine and the public’s understanding of it. With her dedication to veterinary research and her promotion of it as a career choice, she will be a very welcome addition to the Fellowship and I look forward to formally welcoming her at our November Fellowship Day.”

Defend Library - additional research publications added

We now have additional research publications available to download in our Defend library.

[Defend Library - DEFEND - African Swine Fever & Lumpy Skin Disease Consortium \(defend2020.eu\)](https://defend2020.eu)



Defend Practice Abstracts and Translations



Defend have produced 15 Practice Abstracts, 9 of which can be found on the EIP-AGRI website with the remaining 6 due to go live shortly [Addressing the dual emerging threats of African Swine Fever and Lumpy Skin Disease in Europe \(DEFEND\)](#). | [EIP-AGRI \(europa.eu\)](#).

We have translated these 15 Practice Abstracts into 11 languages to increase the reach of those interested in Defend's work.

The languages we have translated into are listed below and can be accessed by clicking the links.

[Albanian](#)

[Bulgarian](#)

[Greek](#)

[Italian](#)

[Macedonian_Cyrillic](#)

[Montenegrin-Latin](#)

[Polish](#)

[Romanian](#)

[Serbian](#)

[Turkish](#)

[Ukrainian](#)

defend2020.eu

iKT Award

VSF Italia's Workshop: Impact of ASF – African Swine Fever on indigenous swine breeds and backyard farms in Eastern EU Countries



On 29th and 30th June, 2023, VSF Italia, held a workshop in Sofia, Bulgaria entitled: “Impact of ASF – African Swine Fever on indigenous swine breeds and backyard farms in Eastern EU Countries” financed by the Defend2020 project.

The two day workshop was available to join in person and key partners included:

- producer associations
- Bulgarian authority
- Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut
- Authority scientific
- the European institution

In addition to this, some representatives of other project partners and MAP joined the meeting online. VSF Italy played a role in investigating the dynamics underpinning the impact of ASF in the case of an EU Member States community of farmers which represents the domestic biodiversity heritage and faces unprecedented threats to the extinction of a rare key indigenous pig breed: the East Balkan Swine (EBS).

The workshop promoted networking and allowed the possibility to face the problem from different angles and promote knowledge transfer between the consortium partners and with similar realities in other EU and non-EU countries (e.g., a representative of Serbian veterinary services was invited as speaker).

which African swine fever persists and the impact this will have on indigenous breeds and their survival.

The final report will be translated into Bulgarian and both reports will be shared with all the participants, reaching more than 100 people.

Only through cooperation between different professional profiles can we find measures that can simultaneously address ASF control and protect biodiversity, breeders and animal welfare.

The full report is available to download

here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ehnAvd5DR3em7guoYdPIDlixQ8j3oZt/view?usp=drive_link

iKT Award

Dr Shalala Zeynalova, AAU



The main goal of this project was to hold a seminar for students of the veterinary faculty. The veterinary faculty in Azerbaijan is the only one located in the city of Ganja, 450 km from the capital Baku. Usually students of this faculty have very little information about international projects and new research works of scientists.

The training was held in the veterinary faculty. Students of 3-4 courses of the faculty participated. There is no specialization for veterinarians in Azerbaijan (virology, clinicians, etc.). In addition to students, teachers also participated. Dr

first outbreak of LSD occurred in the country and the consequences of the disease. It was very interesting for the students as they had no information about this disease. During the training, all participants were provided with booklets, that covered the standard operating procedures describing the diagnosis of the disease. The results of the seminar were reported to the Rector of the University and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mostly students who live in villages study veterinary medicine and this has a great influence on the general worldview. They think that a veterinarian is only about treating animals. In my example, I tried to convey to them that veterinary medicine is a multidisciplinary concept and they can be good scientists. There is even such a statement: medicine treats people, and veterinary medicine treats all of humanity.

The most interesting moment of the seminar was that, for the first time, students learned about HORIZON 2020 and the projects it covers.

Gender Equality in Defend



Gender Equality was an issue that the Defend team wanted to focus on. For more details on how we addressed this, please follow the link to our website where you can read the report in full: ['How we tackled Gender Equality within the Defend project'](#)

iKT Awards

Impact of ASF in rural communities and smallholders

Online Webinar 19th December 2022

VSF Italia



The online webinar allowed for a discussion between different realities and countries affected by ASF. It focused on the impact on smallholders and rural communities and the preservation of local breeds, such as the Bazna pig and the East Balkan pig. The speakers presented the situation in Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Cambodia, and Laos, highlighting how the spread of ASF has been managed in different contexts, and the related consequences.

The event was open to everyone potentially involved in the topic, from farmers to hunters, but since it was held in English, this could have limited the target. Around 50 participants participated in the webinar, most of whom were veterinarians even if more the 70 people were registered through an online format.

Considering their background, the discussion allowed a good interconnection between the various work-packages of the DEFEND project.

The webinar has been a good chance to take stock of the ASF situation from different points of view. The comparison between different countries (both in Europe and out of Europe) has allowed the spreading of information on ASF impact, raising awareness on emarginated realities. Autochthonous pig breeds, backyard pig farms

topics, the webinar helped create a net between far but similar realities.

The webinar has opened a dialogue on the topic thanks to the connections created. It will give a chance to hold further events finding a way to act properly to protect biodiversity and smallholders also during emergencies.

Upcoming Events

08 - 11 April 2024, Microbiology Annual Conference, [Annual Conference 2024 | Microbiology Society](#)

Apr 09 - 12, 2024 Innate Immunity Across the Molecular, Cellular, Tissue and Therapeutic. Keystone Conference, Banff, Alberta, Canada [Conference Listing | Keystone Symposia](#)

June 24 - 28, 2024, 43rd Annual Meeting of the American Society for Virology, Ohio State University, Greater Columbus Convention Center. [Meetings | American Society for Virology \(asv.org\)](#)

25-27 September 2024, Epizone Annual Meeting, Uppsala, Sweden [AM 2024 - Epizone \(epizone-eu.net\)](#)

This will be the final Defend Newsletter. If you do need to contact us for any other matters you can email the DEFEND mailbox (defend@pirbright.ac.uk).

